

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend claims 2-6, 8, 10, 11, and 13 as follows. Please cancel claim 7 without prejudice to continued prosecution. Please add new claim 14. The claims and their status are shown below.

1. (Original) A paper coating composition comprising one or more thickeners, characterised in that at least one of said one or more thickeners is a cold water swellable starch ester.
2. (Currently Amended) A paper coating composition according to claim 1, characterised in that the starch ester is a starch carbamate phosphate ester.
3. (Currently Amended) A paper coating composition according to claim 1 ~~or claim 2~~, characterised in that the starch ester is derived from potato or tapioca starch.
4. (Currently Amended) A paper coating composition according to claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~, characterised in that it comprises 0.005-2% by dry weight, ~~preferably 0.008-1.7% by dry weight~~ of said starch ester.
5. (Currently Amended) A paper coating composition according to claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~, characterised in that the composition ~~it~~ further comprises one or more pigments, one or more binders and, optionally, one or more additives.
6. (Currently Amended) A paper coating composition according to claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~, characterised in that the composition ~~it~~ comprises 30-75% by weight dry substance.
7. (Canceled)
8. (Currently Amended) A process for the preparation of a paper coating composition comprising adding one or more pigments, one or more thickeners, one or more binders and, optionally, one or more additives to an aqueous solution and mixing the solution, characterised in that at least one of said one or more thickeners is a cold water swellable starch ester.
9. (Original) A process according to claim 8 characterised in that the one or more binders are added to the aqueous solution before the one or more thickeners.
10. (Currently Amended) A process according to ~~either of claim 8 or claim 9~~ characterised in that, for 100 parts pigment, the composition ~~it~~ comprises 0.01-2 parts starch ester.

11. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing paper comprising applying to at least one surface of a sheet of paper or a paper web a composition according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1-6~~ or prepared according to the process of claim 8 ~~any one of claims 8 to 10~~.

12. (Original) A method according to claim 11, further comprising the steps of removing any excess coating composition, drying and, optionally, calendering the sheet of paper or paper web.

13. (Currently Amended) A paper product coated with a composition according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1-6~~ or manufactured according to the method of claim 11 ~~or claim 12~~.

14. (New) A paper coating composition according to claim 1, characterised in that it comprises 0.008-1.7% by dry weight of said starch ester.